

With respect to the Amherst

REPORT

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON REVISION OF STUDIES,

TO THE

BOARD OF CONTROLLERS,

ON THE

SUBJECT OF INTRODUCING THE STUDY

OF

Vocal Music into the Public Schools.

UNDER THE

APPROPRIATION FOR THAT PURPOSE MADE BY

COUNCILS.

READ APRIL 13, 1869, ORDERED TO BE PRINTED, AND MADE THE ORDER OF THE
DAY FOR APRIL 20, 1869.

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REPORT.

Councils having voted the sum of \$6,000 for instruction in vocal music, the Committee have endeavored to ascertain the best mode of disbursing this amount, with regard as well to the method, as to the number and description of the schools in which music shall be taught.

An intimation had been expressed that it was the intention of Councils to divide the amount appropriated equally among all the Sections—an interpretation, which, if literally understood, would, for all practical purposes, have rendered it useless. Your Committee were pleased to learn that the Joint Committee of Councils on Schools, through its Chairman, placed no such construction upon the words of the ordinance, but declared the object of the proviso simply to be, to secure a diffusion of the benefits of the appropriation among all the Sections alike, under such a disposition of the fund as this Board might see proper to make.

It was at first presumed that the \$6,000 would be sufficient to instruct *all* the children in *all* the Departments. This sum, however, it was found upon examination, would not suffice even for a text-book to each pupil, were the Committee disposed to recommend the use of one; nor would it even prove adequate to the general instruction of all the children.

This expression of opinion, however, is not uttered in complaint, for the amount given is liberal; and for the purpose of introducing a hitherto untried system, it is a question if it would have been wise to have made it larger.

The subject is, therefore, not without its difficulties; and although your committee have devoted to it a long, earnest, and, as they hope, conscientious consideration, they desire, notwithstanding, the aid of the best exercise of the judgment of the Board in the premises.

Three methods presented themselves in view of this liberal appropriation, which will be considered in turn.

First. The employment of male teachers.

Second. The employment, instead of male teachers, of teachers connected with the schools.

Third. The employment of female teachers not connected with the schools.

And lastly, the consideration was presented whether it would be indispensable, as a preliminary measure, that the adoption of a musical text-book should be recommended by the Text-book Committee.

The choice of a text-book, they find, will in some degree depend upon which of the three modes of instruction just named the Board, in its judgment, shall deem best.

There appear to be in the First School District fifty-three Grammar Schools, male and female included, and the allotment of five male teachers to the District, at a salary of \$1,200 each, would consume the appropriation.

This would assign ten schools to each teacher, and enable him, in the five working hours of each of the five working days of each week, to give one hour of instruction per week to a male Grammar, and one hour per week to a female Grammar School, absorbing, with the time occupied in going to and from the

school, three hours per day, and leaving him little of his time which remained to devote to any additional scholars.

If an additional hour were given, making four to five hours, including the time occupied in going and returning, it would not, perhaps, avail for the purpose of affording instruction to even one male, or, as the choice might be, to one female Secondary School in each Section.

This proposition confines the teaching to the Grammar Schools, and is based upon the supposition that a salary of \$1,200 would be adequate to induce a competent teacher to devote nearly his whole time to the schools.

One or two difficulties, it will be seen, occur, namely: that some Sections have no Grammar Schools, in which case a Consolidated School must be substituted; and on the other hand, Consolidated Schools, so far as the rural Sections are concerned, may be thought quite as deserving of consideration as the Grammar Schools of the more populous Sections. The fact, also, that more time must be devoted to the rural Sections, on account of the distance between the schools, is another circumstance calculated to somewhat disturb the harmony of the plan.

It is evident, therefore, if male teachers are to be employed, at least 6 or 7 will be required to get over the ground instead of 5, and this at a reduced compensation.

This arrangement will be entirely out of the question if it is thought that the policy of the Board should include within its scope instruction in the Consolidated Schools, and when, in addition, it may be seriously doubted whether the terms of the ordinance, the intention of Councils, or even the interpretation put upon the proviso by the joint Committee of those bodies will permit the Board to confine the benefits of instruction to the Grammar Schools, only the further consideration of the first proposition may be dispensed with and the two remaining methods now considered.

But before dismissing this portion of the subject, the Committee may, perhaps, be allowed to refer to the experience of

the schools in the City of New York, where music is at present taught only in the Grammar Schools, and where, in the words of the Superintendent, Mr. S. S. Randall, in reply to the communication addressed to him by the Chairman of your Committee, they find "*they have begun at the wrong end*, a mistake which it is proposed to remedy." With this experience in view, even if the hindrances already stated did not exist, the Committee hope that this Board may not fall into the same error, and they recommend that instruction shall be begun, at least in the Secondary Departments, and as they will hereafter indicate to a certain extent in the Primary Departments.

2d. As to the employment of Teachers, who, as such, are already engaged in the Schools.

So far as relates to imparting a knowledge of the rudiments, the simple elements of musical science, no more industry or aptitude would be required than in mastering and communicating the elements of Grammar or of Arithmetic. And in this view they are glad to find that the able report of the "Committee on Music," made last year to the Boston Board of Education, by Dr. J. Baxter Upham and his associates, concurs.

Mr. J. L. Pickard, Superintendent of the Chicago Public Schools, in writing to the Committee, says, "we expect every teacher we employ, to be able to give instruction in music at least in the theoretical part. Many succeed well in that, who have not the ability to sing a note."

This arrangement would allow instruction to be given in the Primary, Secondary, and Grammar Departments, and as some inducement to such teachers as might choose to qualify themselves, it was thought that an addition to their stipend of \$50 or \$100 per annum, might have a good effect.

The objections, however, to the employment of teachers, who are already engaged in teaching, it is but candid to state, are these:

1st. It would require the adoption of a text-book for each pupil, thus absorbing more than the amount of the appropriation for music.

2d. It would be impossible where the lower departments were not in the possession of a musical instrument, or should the teacher not possess an ear and voice for music, though perhaps this obstacle might not prove such in the Primary Departments, where it is not absolutely demanded that sounds should be used, the study being confined to the merest rudiments.

3d. There would exist a want of uniformity in the qualifications of the teacher, and when instruction was required in the higher departments, especially in the Grammar Department, a previous study and more special preparation for the task would be indispensable.

And lastly, granting an addition to salaries, although a measure seemingly just, might cause a spirit of jealousy and dissatisfaction, on the ground that an increase was given for teaching an established branch of instruction during the hours which the teacher would at all events be required to devote to her duties.

The last two objections, although obstacles, will not likely exist very long. The graduates of our Normal School are becoming fitted to assume this department of instruction, of course with varying degrees of success, as a greater or less degree of talent for the science of music may exist. This being the case, when the proper time shall have arrived, music may be made a matter of special examination, the degree of proficiency being one of the elements in the choice. Under these circumstances, no jealousy could arise, for an addition to salaries in all such instances, it could be understood, would be given; and an inducement would thus be offered for the greatest comparative proficiency in a knowledge of music.

In Boston, as remarked in the Report of the Committee on Music; already cited, other conditions being equal, the ability of candidates to instruct in music is taken into consideration.

It having been deemed inexpedient to recommend either of the first two methods, the Committee now proceed to an examination of the third and last named: the employment of female teachers not connected with the schools.

Female teaching can be procured at a much less cost than male. This distinction we ourselves establish and enforce. It is a matter of regret it should be so, although, among the corps of musical proficients, there are female teachers who demand and receive as large a remuneration for their services as male teachers.

The premiss, however, as we have stated it, is true; and also that there is a willingness on the part of female teachers to accept a less amount of compensation.

As has been mentioned, there are of

Grammar Schools,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	53
Secondary,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	105
Consolidated,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	29
								<hr/> 187

This, at one hour per week, will make 187 hours, which, divided by 5 teaching days, will make 37 hours per day.

Employing 12 teachers, at 3 hours per day, and at a salary of								
\$400 each, will cost	-	-	-	-	-	-		\$4,800
Leaving a surplus of	-	-	-	-	-	-		1,200
								<hr/> \$6,000

This surplus, should Councils renew the appropriation, can be used in securing the services of three additional teachers, thus extending the field of instruction, although the Committee do not at present recommend the employment of more than twelve teachers, unless it is found absolutely necessary to employ more.

As one-third of the working year will have elapsed before the course can be entered upon, the actual outlay for 12 teachers,

at \$266 67 each will be - - - - - \$3,200 04
 The appropriation being - - - - - 6,000 00

The surplus for the first year will be - - - - - \$2,799 96

Which will be more than sufficient to procure the necessary charts.

The Committee, therefore, recommend the employment of female teachers, in the most entire confidence that if the plan suggested at the close of this report shall be adopted, the Board will be able, out of so large a population as Philadelphia possesses, to procure a sufficient number of highly accomplished and competent teachers of vocal music.

The three methods of instruction proposed were those only which occurred to your Committee, and, in reporting the first two, the Committee thought it due to the Board to give the reasons which influenced them, in order that the whole ground, so far as the Committee were capable of presenting it, might be gone over, and thus, to some extent, the labors of the Board be saved.

Upon one point your Committee feel they cannot speak with too much positiveness, at least at present, and that is, the inadvisability of adopting any musical text-book. The teaching should be wholly by the aid of the eye, coupled with repeated verbal statements by the teacher, so often reiterated, that with the assistance of the staff, which should be painted upon the black-board, and with that of charts, of which we shall hereafter more particularly speak, an impression shall be made which shall not be readily obliterated.

In Boston, where it is acknowledged music is taught with great success, this is the method pursued.

And in this connection we may be permitted to quote from the report of Superintendent Hancock, to be found in the last number of the Pennsylvania School Journal, who, upon a visit to one of the Boston Schools, remarks :

“ Thursday morning I visited the Emerson (Primary) School with Mr. Mason ; and I did so with the more especial purpose of observing his method of teaching music to the lower grades of pupils, and his plan of availing himself of the assistance of the regular teachers of the school. In one of the lower rooms I saw a little girl go to the music chart, take the pointer, and, acting as a teacher, sing several measures of a simple tune, pointing out the notes, naming both the letters and syllables—alone at first, and then the whole school uniting with her. Another little girl would then take her place, go through the same routine, take her seat, and be followed by another ; and thus the exercise went on, until a large number of pupils had, in this way, acted the part of teachers. And these little teachers were subjected to criticism, too. The teacher of the room would frequently ask her pupils if they thought the little girl at the chart was doing her work well ? And if the negative answer was given, she would ask them to point out the defect, and would call on some one to take the pointer and try to do it better. I could not help thinking this a most excellent training to give scholars courage, and to bring out individuality ; and that if it were continued through the grades above, it would be just such a training as would make first-rate teachers—such teachers as would have methods and opinions of their own, and not be afraid to carry them out in their school-room practice.”

One argument which may be used by those favoring the choice of a text-book, is, that it affords a selection of song music. One of the greatest objections, however, to the prevailing mode of teaching music, is the strong partiality for singing melodies, before the rudiments are even acquired—an attempt to walk before even the ability to creep. It may be well to teach young children, as is done in infant schools, simple tunes by ear ; this can do no harm. We refer, on the contrary, to endeavoring, as a serious part of the hour’s teaching—for it will be recollected but an hour is devoted to the study—to acquire familiarity with some selected piece of music.

As the class advances, the teacher may find it expedient, as an occasional exercise, to try a song exercise, but so simple in its character that it shall keep pace with, and not exceed, the degree of knowledge the pupil may have reached. And this can be done by slips, which are in themselves inexpensive.

The Committee are of opinion that music shall be taught as one of the regular studies, beginning even with the Primary Department, and this as auxiliary to the weekly lesson. They are not at present prepared to recommend any particular plan, as the adoption of one will depend upon the result of the workings of the new system.

In suggesting the use of charts, the Committee do not mean to absolutely condemn the use of text-books hereafter. The selection of a proper text-book, when the period shall have arrived to make it, should be an act deliberate in its performance. Of books, there are a number, and which vary in their merits, and the work, when once chosen, should not be readily changed.

These charts, published in Boston, are thus described by the publishers :

DR. LOWELL MASON'S MUSIC CHARTS.

First Series, 30 Charts, price	-	-	(net) \$7 50
Second Series, 30 Charts, price	-	-	(net) 7 50

This work, which every teacher of Vocal Music will find extremely useful and convenient, consists of Charts or Diagrams, each of which is 30 by 42 inches in size, designed as aids in teaching classes the Elements of Music, and its Notation. They embrace Exercises, Illustrations, simple songs and pieces, such as teachers are accustomed to write on the black-board, progressively arranged, and printed from mammoth type, which can be easily seen from all parts of a large hall.

They are printed on a superfine bleached and calendered Manilla paper, of extraordinary strength, prepared expressly for them, and all the charts of each series are attached to a single roller, so that when not in use each

series forms a single roll, about 45 inches in length, and, encased in the enamelled cloth cover, it can be easily transported by hand. A pointer accompanies each series, to which it is neatly attached by a pocket in the enamelled cloth case.

[The two series were here shown to the Board.]

There are of male and female Grammar, Secondary and Consolidated Schools—that is, counting a male and female school as one—94; so that the sum of \$1,410 will supply each of these with a full set of charts of both series.

It may be found that one series will do for the Secondary Schools, and the other for the Grammar Schools, and thus a further economy may be enforced. At all events, there will, in addition, be an amount sufficient to purchase a text-book for each of the regular teachers as are now employed in the schools, should it hereafter be determined to pursue music as auxiliary to the weekly lessons.

The greatest difficulty of their task, the Committee are pleased to say, has been removed by the suggestion of a member of the Board. This was, as to the mode of choosing the teachers.

The plan recommended is this: That the Boards of Directors of the Sections send in the names and the address of such female teachers as may be induced to apply. Also, that an advertisement be inserted in the newspapers, inviting applications for the situation, and that such applicants shall be notified of the time and place of an examination, to be conducted by musical experts, and those who shall receive the highest averages upon answers to written questions, shall be those from whom the selection of teachers shall be made.

The Committee, therefore, suggest the passage of the following resolution:

Resolved, That the Committee on Revision of Studies be and they are hereby authorized to carry out the recommendations contained in the above report.

All which is respectfully submitted, by

EDWARD ARMSTRONG,
JNO. W. CLARK,
M. HALL STANTON,
JAMES H. MACBRIDE,
LEWIS C. CASSIDY.

PHILADELPHIA, April 13th, 1869.

